

## CLAIMS

- 1    1.    In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user  
2    terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game  
3    to at least one user, the method comprising:  
4                deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;  
5                implementing an episode into an episodic game module; and  
6                transmitting the episodic game module to at least one user terminal.
- 1    2.    The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2                scheduling intervals for generation and transmission of episodic game  
3                modules.
- 1    3.    The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
2                responsive to a technological improvement occurring during a first part of  
3                an interval for generation and transmission of an episodic game  
4                module, incorporating the technological improvement into the  
5                episodic game module scheduled for generation and transmission  
6                for that interval.
- 1    4.    The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2                responsive to a technological improvement occurring during  
3                implementation of an episode, incorporating the technological  
4                improvement into the episodic game module scheduled for  
5                generation and transmission for that interval.
- 1    5.    The method of claim 2 further comprising:

2 responsive to a real world event occurring related to the storyline of the  
3 game during an interval, incorporating the event into the episodic  
4 game module scheduled for generation and transmission for that  
5 interval.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein generating episodic game modules further  
2 comprises:

3 generating a technology module and content module for each episodic  
4 game module to allow modification of the technology module  
5 without requiring modification of the content of an episodic game  
6 module.

1 7. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user  
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game  
3 to at least one user comprising:

4 constructing a plurality of episodes to relate the storyline;  
5 implementing an episode into a game module; and  
6 transmitting the episodic game module to at least one user terminal.

1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein an episodic game module is transmitted at  
2 periodically scheduled intervals.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the episodic game modules are transmitted  
2 monthly.

1 10. A method of providing an Internet-enabled game comprising:

2 receiving information regarding a user's current state in the game; and  
3 responsive to the current state, enabling episodic content to be accessed by  
4 a user.

1 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a voice mail message related  
3 to the user.

1 12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a voice mail message related  
3 to the user.

1 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a pager message related to  
3 the user.

1 14. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 receiving a search request from a user; and  
3 responsive to the current state of the user in the game, transmitting search  
4 results to the user.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the search results are game-related responsive to  
2 the search request being game-related and the current state of the user indicating that the  
3 user is permitted to receive game-related search results.

1 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the search results are not game-related  
2 responsive to the current state of the user indicating that the user is not permitted to  
3 receive game-related search results responsive to the search term entered by the user.

1 17. The method of claim 10 wherein current state information comprises a  
2 notification from an application module resident on a user's terminal that the user has  
3 accessed a web page.

1 18. The method of claim 10 wherein current state information comprises a user  
2 action.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is calling a predefined telephone  
2 number.

1 20. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is accessing a predetermined web  
2 site.

1 21. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is requesting a specific search  
2 term.

1 22. The method of claim 10 wherein episodic content is stored within a third-party  
2 website that is content-related to the storyline, and the users are directed to the web-site  
3 to discover the episodic content.

1 23. The method of claim 22 episodic content is placed on a third party web site for  
2 compensation related to user traffic to the web site related to users searching for the  
3 episodic content.

1 24. The method of claim 10 wherein an episode is made available responsive to  
2 determining whether a user has submitted payment for the episode.

1 25. An apparatus for delivering episodic content comprising:  
2 a content server for storing a plurality of episodic gaming modules to  
3 which user terminals may have access responsive to receiving  
4 authorization, the episodic gaming modules having a related  
5 storyline, and in which authorization is granted to access the  
6 episodic gaming modules serially.

1 26. A method of episodically delivering entertainment content to a plurality of users  
2 comprising:  
3 delivering an initial episode of content, wherein the initial episode  
4 comprises an initial set of technology for enabling an initial  
5 episode of content; and  
6 delivering subsequent episodes at periodically scheduled intervals to at  
7 least one user.

1 27. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 obtaining an e-mail address from a user; and  
3 delivering information related to the entertainment content to the obtained  
4 e-mail address.

1 28. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 providing an e-mail address to a user; and

3 delivering information related to the entertainment content to the provided  
4 address.

1 29. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 placing information relevant to content of the episode on a web site  
3 maintained by a third party; and wherein the information  
4 comprises a request that the user access the web site to find the  
5 relevant information.

1 30. The method of claim 26 comprising:  
2 identifying a relevant current event news story; and  
3 transmitting information regarding the current event news story to at least  
4 one user to provide additional information related to the episode  
5 content.

1 31. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 determining a link to a web site containing the news story; and wherein  
3 transmitting information comprises transmitting link information to  
4 the web site containing the news story to at least one user.

1 32. The method of claim 30 further comprising:  
2 creating a false news story related to the identified news story, wherein the  
3 false news story links the content of the episode to the identified  
4 news story.

1 33. The method of claim 32 further comprising:

2 publishing the false news story on a web site maintained by a developer of  
3 the entertainment content.

1 34. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 sending a message to a user's voice mail box, wherein the message is  
3 related to the entertainment content.

1 35. The method of claim 34 further comprising the step of:  
2 providing a user with a voice mail box.

1 36. The method of claim 34 wherein sending message further comprises sending a  
2 message to the user's voice mail wherein the message is represented to be from a  
3 character in the entertainment content.

1 37. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 obtaining a facsimile number from a user; and  
3 transmitting information relating to the entertainment content to the  
4 obtained facsimile number.

1 38. The method of claim 26 further comprising:  
2 providing a facsimile number from a user; and  
3 transmitting information relating to the entertainment content to the  
4 providing facsimile number.

1 39. The method of claim 26 wherein new technology is used to implement an episode,  
2 further comprising:

3 incrementally delivering data to related to enabling the new technology as  
4 part of a plurality of episodes to a user.

1 40. The method of claim 26 wherein an episode requires a video file to be played by a  
2 user, further comprising:

3 incrementally delivering data comprising the video file as part of a  
4 plurality of episodes to a user.

1 41. The method of claim 26 wherein an application developer implements the  
2 episodes delivered to the users using technology from at least one third-party vendor, and  
3 the third-party vendor updates the technology delivered to the users without participation  
4 of the application developer.

1 42. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user  
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game  
3 to at least one user, the method comprising:

4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;  
5 implementing an episode into a sequence of episodic game modules; and  
6 periodically transmitting to one of the episodic game modules to at least  
7 one user terminal.

1 43. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user  
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game  
3 to at least one user, the method comprising:

4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;  
5 implementing an episode into an episodic game module; and



6 periodically permitting access to one of the episodic game modules by at  
7 least one user terminal.

1 44. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user  
2 terminals, a method for providing entertainment content comprising a storyline for an  
3 electronic game to at least one user, comprising:

4 receiving a request from a user to gain access to an episode of the  
5 electronic game; and  
6 delivering an episode of the electronic game to the user.

1 45. The method of claim 44 further comprising:

2 receiving an access code from a user to gain access to an episode of  
3 entertainment content;  
4 verifying validity of the access code; and  
5 responsive to the access code being validated, allowing access to the  
6 episode of entertainment content.

1 46. The method of claim 44 further comprising:

2 determining a date for the request received from the user; and  
3 permitting access to the requested episode responsive to the determined  
4 date being within a permitted window for delivery.